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SUBJECT: INDIAN PRIME MINISTER SINGH'S VISIT TO GERMANY

Classified By: Acting POL M/C John Lister for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) (Summary) Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Germany from April 23-25 raised India's profile as an international partner for Germany and gave Singh a chance to address German concerns about the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative. In her public comments about the initiative, Chancellor Merkel said she believes that, assuming the issue continues to make progress in the U.S. Congress and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Germany should be able to "intensify" its civil nuclear cooperation with India. Merkel praised India for its vote in the IAEA to send the Iran issue to the UN Security Council and a Foreign Ministry official told us he expects Singh to continue playing a constructive role on Iran, despite the constraints India faces on this issue. Merkel also praised Singh for his efforts to bring stability to the Asian subcontinent and announced that EU cooperation with India on science and technology will be one of the important themes of Germany's EU Presidency next year.
(End Summary)

Raising India's Profile

¶2. (C) Singh's visit got substantial press coverage, typified by a front page picture of Chancellor Merkel shaking the hand of an Indian-manufactured robot with the caption "The New Friend." Ralf Horlemann, Deputy Director of the South Asia Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told us that Germany has had a strategic partnership with India since ¶2000. However, India has only become a focus of attention of political elites, think tanks and the business leaders much more recently, and the Singh visit brought this to a head.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

¶3. (C) The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative figured heavily in Singh's discussions with Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Steinmeier. In her public comments following her meeting with Singh, Merkel said she believes that, assuming the issue continues to make progress in the U.S. Congress and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Germany should be able to "intensify" its civil nuclear cooperation with India. She qualified the comment somewhat by emphasizing that Germany is following the discussions in the Congress and NSG closely, and by saying that Germany would develop its position in the context of the "international community." Merkel also underlined that the emphasis Singh placed on India's commitment to nuclear nonproliferation was very important to Germany, and she characterized IAEA Director General el Baradei's support for the agreement as significant. Horlemann said Foreign Minister Steinmeier told Singh the Germans would be asking concrete questions about

the commitments the Indians are prepared to make and would expect concrete answers.

Iran

14. (C) Merkel praised India for its vote in the IAEA to send the Iran nuclear issue to the Security Council. She added that Germany and India are of one mind that international solidarity is critical in dealing with the Iran issue. Horlemann said Steinmeier also thanked Singh for the IAEA vote and said nothing critical about India's Iran policy during his meeting. According to Horlemann, the Germans believe, based on this meeting and several rounds of consultations in New Delhi, that India will work constructively with the EU-3 even though the Indians have a different set of interests in Iran.

Pakistan

15. (C) Chancellor Merkel publicly praised Singh for his efforts over the past two years to bring greater stability to the subcontinent. She said she strongly supported further negotiations and intensified cooperation between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khurshid Kasuri, traveled to Germany right after Singh's visit, meeting with Foreign Minister Steinmeier just one day after Steinmeier's meeting with Singh. According to Horlemann, the Pakistani Foreign Minister argued that the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative could upset the balance of power in the region. He said he counted on Germany to remain true to its obligations and principles. Steinmeier told him that the Germans are still developing their position.

Energy Security

16. (C) Singh and his Indian delegation spent much of their time in Germany promoting Indian business at the Hanover Industrial Fair, where they served as co-chair with Germany. Both sides stressed the possibilities for expanding trade between the two countries, which has been increasing 20-30 percent annually. The two governments signed an agreement creating an Energy Forum, which will organize regular meetings between high level officials and business leaders to pursue cooperation in such fields as energy conservation and renewable energy (but not nuclear energy). Chancellor Merkel also announced that EU cooperation with India on science and technology will be one of the important themes of Germany's EU Presidency next year.

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